

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 10, 2016

Agenda Item: Canyon Creek Wildlife Management Area Addition Specimen Creek Donation (R3)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Min

Background

The Specimen Creek Property donation would add approximately 700 acres of important wildlife habitat to the northern border of the Canyon Creek Wildlife Management Area. Its primary goal is to expand wildlife habitat and further protect a stream corridor containing native westslope cutthroat trout, while maintaining public access to public lands in a strategic location. This parcel, like the existing Canyon Creek WMA, provides hunting opportunity for mule deer and elk, winter range for mule deer and moose, and spring, summer and fall range for all three of these big game species. In addition, the entire suite of carnivores, grizzly and black bear, wolves, Canada lynx, wolverine, bobcat, etc., utilize the area, and this parcel falls within the continental divide wildlife movement corridor between the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) and areas further south.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP has worked with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on this proposed project. There has been no other public involvement to date. Upon Commission endorsement, FWP will conduct appropriate public review and analysis.

Alternatives and Analysis

The alternatives are to either accept donation of the property or not. The property would increase the size of the WMA by about 30 percent. The land has high conservation values, as it is adjacent to FWP and USFS lands. Accepting donation of the property will require additional weed control and perimeter fencing to bring the property up to WMA standards. If FWP doesn't acquire the property, it is likely to be sold and further developed. Development in the area could result in loss of wildlife and fisheries habitat and public recreational opportunities not only on the Specimen Creek property but adjacent public lands.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends endorsement by the Commission, which would allow the department to complete further analysis and public review. This property would expand and enhance important habitat for a variety of wildlife and fisheries resources, and enhance hunter opportunity within the WMA and adjacent USFS properties.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission endorse this addition to Canyon Creek WMA, allowing the department to proceed with further work on this project.